



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING **LES MOULINS** HABANA

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ALEJANDRO CAMPINS

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Opening Sunday 18 October 2015, noon – 6 pm
Wednesdays to Sundays, from Noon to 6 pm

GALLERIA CONTINUA Les Moulins is proud to present Alejandro Campins' first solo exhibition in France. This is our first collaboration with one of the forerunners of Cuba's young generation of artists, and follows the opening of a fourth branch of GALLERIA CONTINUA in the Chinese quarter of Havana, Cuba.

The young painter's work, already strongly informed by the transforming and abandoned sites and landscapes of his home country, has found a new source of inspiration with his latest exhibition.

Campins was invited by the gallery from Cuba to the old site of the Moulin de Sainte-Marie, once one of the largest paper factories on the outskirts of Paris. Over a number of weeks, Campins explored the site of this old factory like an anthropologist. He looked, collected, and captured his visions in the sketches he made. The result of his research is more than a document. Campins' paintings don't fix any particular given time and space. They are, rather, so many anonymous visions, carrying within themselves the sensations and energies of a place in perpetual transformation.

Campins is interested in impermanence, in the evolution as much as the involution of the factory, in the scars left by successive chan-

ge on the facades of the buildings and on the landscape. Like the pages of a book, these traces come together in a narrative that one finds oneself beginning to read in paintings such as *ACERTIJO* and *FALSA BELLEZA*. Though invisible, the human figure is not absent from this narrative. The landscapes and the forms of the buildings themselves evoke it. Everything is evoked, nothing given, allowing the visitor to bring his or her own memory and imagination to this collective history.

Impermanence is central to Campins' interests. In a dynamic of constant renewal, the old buildings die, while on their facades the natural environment comes to life again. Here impermanence generates a complex beauty, captured in the midst of change and fixed in the paintings of a Romantic, itinerant artist, whose foreign gaze gives back to us a metaphysical space somewhere between reality and fiction.

In Campins' canvases, a metaphysical vision of renewal, of death lived out as a new principle, ties together nature and architecture in a single landscape and a single narrative.

This temporal stratification of a natural environment in the midst of recovering its old place and the architectural scars showing the breadth of a single history is also evoked by Campins' painterly techniques. A trained oil painter, applying his colours in successive glazes, the artist is obliged to wait between applications, and let time go to work on the canvas. This chromatic stratification produces an ethereal opacity and leaves the ground of the canvas imbued with a situation of anonymity and timelessness.

With some of the works, the stratification is made even more evident. Campins adds collage to the painted canvas, a new image that leaves the old image visible, like the timeless traces of the factory.

With works like *Tibet*, *Mount Sinai*, *Village au bord du volcan*, and *Arc en ciel au-dessus de la falaise*, Campins intervenes directly in the site and the landscape, recuperating small stones to which he applies precious images. The visitor must sharpen her eyes in order to discover a narrative without geography. The river, running right by the site, becomes a veritable means of transport for Campins, providing him with the means for connecting images he has made far away from here to a painterly ground he has given himself from among the material found onsite, without this assemblage creating the least discordance.

Alejandro Campins was born in 1981 in Cuba, where he lives and works. A graduate of Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte, he is one of Cuba's emerging generation of artists. His painting tends to reflect everyday society and reality. He stands out for his ability to mix materials and his mastery of large scale canvases. Despite his young age, Campins has already been included in numerous collective exhibitions and biennials, including Cairo's and Portugal's in 2010. He has been the subject of more than ten solo exhibitions, including the current exhibition at the Moulin de Sainte Marie.